



ARIZONA SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION

MEDIA ALERT:

School Counselors to State Leaders: Prioritize Mental Health

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January 14, 2021, Phoenix, AZ --- Arizona's School Counselors have done everything in their power to ensure the academic, career and social/emotional needs of our students are met. Our counselors will continue to be dedicated in service to our students, whether remote or in person, but need that same dedication from our leaders.

“To paraphrase Governor Ducey: These aren't just statistics. These are people in our lives. Our parents, our kids, our friends, our neighbors and our coworkers,” said Bill Lucas, counselor at Agua Fria High School and Assistant Executive Chair with the Arizona School Counselors Association (AzSCA). “We have to support them and provide them with the support they need to get through this and thrive.”

There are many aspects to this public health crisis, but as counselors we know that without prioritizing social emotional learning and mental health in schools our students will just fall farther behind. As such, the Arizona School Counselors Association calls on our Governor and legislators to bring this important topic - the mental health of our students as well as educators - to the forefront of their discussions this session.

The most concrete form support for mental health can take is in the form of a budget that reflects it as a priority. Budgets are moral documents, and utilizing part of our current surplus towards training, interventions, and staffing to tackle this issue head on would be in the best interests of our students.

Arizona already has one of the highest student-to-school counselor ratios in the country. The Governor and legislature made a [historic first investment](#) two years ago to start to bring that down. However, the pandemic has increased the need for the in-school services that School Counselors provide. We need creative thinking and resources for the boots on the ground to provide those one-on-one services. Together we can collaborate to start the healing process that our students desperately need.

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The Arizona School Counselors Association, Inc. is a non-profit organization representing Arizona school counselors. We support school counselors through professional development, resources, and advocacy at the state and national level. We empower school counselors to lead systemic change by delivering to all students an ASCA National Model Program, aligned with state standards for academic, social/emotional, and career development.